

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 702

By Burks

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Robert R. Bell of Tennessee Technological University on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this body should honor those estimable citizens who have performed their duties with the utmost probity and whose efforts throughout their years of industry were dedicated to providing thoughtful and exemplary service to the citizens of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert R. Bell is one such distinguished public servant who has served with honor and distinction during his long career in higher education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bell has thirty-six years of service with Tennessee Technological University (TTU), first serving with acumen and alacrity as a professor in the school's College of Business, then as a dean, and finally as the president of the university, a post he has held since 2000; and

WHEREAS, as the president of Tennessee Tech University, he oversaw eleven straight years of enrollment growth. TTU's enrollment is currently 12,000; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bell also brought to fruition a program which prepares the state's teachers, from Pre-K to college levels, to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Millard Oakley STEM Center is housed in a state-of-the-art home in the new, 26,000-square-foot, Ray Morris Hall; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bell recognized the need for a nursing school in rural Tennessee and garnered support from the state legislature, the U.S. Congress, and private and corporate donors to fund the construction of a multi-million dollar Nursing and Health Services Building; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, TTU's agricultural programs and farms have attracted some of the State's best students to the area and introduced them to hands-on learning at one of the state's biggest cattle operations; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Bell's direction, thousands of teachers earned degrees at TTU every semester and put their skills to work in the region to improve the quality of education in Middle Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Bell also oversaw the construction and completion of two residence halls—New Hall South and New Hall North; and

WHEREAS, under his guidance, TTU established Learning Villages, which aim to bring students and faculty together around a common interest and bridge the gap between the living and learning segments of campus, as well as to encourage college completion; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bell also championed programs which increased access to education and responded to industry needs in order to improve the education and economic progress of the state; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership during the difficult economic environment, TTU has remained affordable. Students graduate with the lightest debt load in the region, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, and sixty percent of 2010 TTU graduates left school debt free; and

WHEREAS, the university's endowment has doubled during Mr. Bell's presidency to nearly \$60 million; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career at Tennessee Tech University, President Bell has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues, staff, and students alike; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and thank Dr. Robert R. Bell for his many years of meritorious service to Tennessee Technological University, commend his laudable service to the good people of Tennessee, salute his professional expertise and personal excellence, and extend to

him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.